

Peter Glovin - HB5668

My name is Peter Glovin and I am from Fairfield, CT. I am here to testify today to support HB5668 to develop a micro credential pilot program to benefit learners across the state. I have lived in Connecticut for 32 years, throughout which my professional career has been entirely devoted educational endeavors. I have held roles at textbook publishing giants; college-ranking companies; start-ups dedicated to secure email, blogging, and penpal platforms; a digital publisher with beloved characters, delivering animated supplemental content; and, most recently, at a data visualization endeavor from which a micro credential platform has blossomed. In all that time, I have seen nothing that levels the playing field of educational opportunities in the way the micro credentials can.

The pandemic has underscored the fact that education in this country is at a critical inflection point. We must provide varied and different avenues for our citizens to learn and to show mastery of that learning that will help open up opportunities for them, and enable progression from K12 to Higher Education in all its forms, and ensure they have various pathways to the profession of their choice. Once in that profession, they need additional ways to upskill and pivot if necessary. Micro credentials take options for learning engagement, achievement, and validity of mastery to a new level.

Much of Governor Lamont's proposed budget for 2021, as well as the 2020 Workforce Strategic Plan from the Governor's Workforce Council, speaks to the need for programs like the pilot that is proposed in this bill. I have spent much of the last two months engaged in conversations with various education and workforce stakeholders across the state including the CT Commission for Educational Technology, ReadyCT, Connecticut Business and Industry Association, The WorkPlace, the Department of Economic Community Development, the Governor's Workforce Development Unit, the CT Office of Higher Education, and the leadership of the Higher Ed and Workforce committee. Everyone we have spoken with agrees that micro credentials will help the citizens of Connecticut gain better and more equitable access to learning opportunities. A simple walk and conversation in our neighborhood with my friend, neighbor and local Representative Cristin McCarthy Vahey, inspired her to propose this bill after she heard my answer to her innocuous question "What are you up to?"

As you'll hear from my colleague Patrick Leonard in a moment, all constituencies benefit when a robust and rigorous micro credential program is in place and available to a state's residents. Microcredentials expand access to educational opportunities, lowering cost and reducing time required to earn certification. Microcredentials improve communication between employers and potential employees regarding the skills required, making it easier for learners to pursue meaningful certifications. Microcredentials help hiring managers, providing verification that employees possess the skills needed to be successful in different roles. Microcredentials enable existing employees to up-skill more quickly.

Interest seems to be high across all relevant stakeholders in Connecticut. We are facing multiple crises in K12 and Higher Ed enrollment and record setting unemployment in our state, with not enough skilled workers to fill the jobs that are available. It's the time to be bold and take an aggressive approach to giving all learners the opportunity to succeed. This proposed micro credential platform pilot is an important first step.